

Chapter XII

Next Steps: Pointing to the Future

This plan represents a major milestone for the Wallingford Community a completed and officially adopted neighborhood plan. In order for this planning to have its intended consequence, and to remain important to the community and the City, it is expected that the plan will be amended and updated over time. It should be a living document and guide for future development — both physical and social — over the next two decades. It is hoped that **it will neither end up gathering dust on a shelf nor** become ossified and rigid, unable to adapt to new conditions.

These hopes for the plan will not come to fruition without accounting for healthy change, adjustment, and continuing growth of the plan's scope — as well as inevitable change in the community itself. It is for this reason that the plan suggests several directions for action to keep the plan alive and meaningful into the future.,

Benchmarks and monitoring

In some areas, notably housing, the plan suggests benchmarks and monitoring outcomes of plan strategies. It is possible to increase the scope and reach of benchmarks based upon surveys and research accomplished during the course of this plan, which appears in the appendices. This research includes a Housing Profile, a Social Service Inventory, a business survey, and the traffic and transportation background that has been accumulated during the course of the plan.

In the area of Land Use and community investment, the city% GIS capabilities should continue to provide a rich resource of information, year by year.

By collecting and publishing these background measures, and then tracking change over time, it will be possible to document in quantifiable ways the successes (and non-successes) of the plan. Then new strategies can be added, and ineffective ones scrapped as the community sees what is working to further its goals and its vision.

The growth of the social fabric of the community is harder to measure, but it would be possible to develop a baseline survey of attitudes among residents, businesses, renters and landowners,

built around the anticipated strategies of Weaving Wallingford. The effect of these strategies could then either be supported or not supported by tracking surveys.

The rationale for benchmarks is, of course, to understand, beyond opinions and preferences, if there are quantifiable successes that come out of particular strategies of the plan. While urban social and physical systems are much too complicated to isolate with scientific certainty, at least benchmarking will give an idea of how the neighborhood changes over time. And it is one important way to tell if the plan is working.

Expectations for review at six years

This plan should undergo a major update every five to eight years. If the time goes beyond that, it may be as difficult to amend the plan as to create a new one. There are, as noted in the plan, several undone planning tasks that simply could not be accommodated given the timeline and budget of this planning cycle. Design Guidelines, Historical preservation and an open space plan for the community as a whole, were not well represented during this planning process, and should be undertaken as soon as energy and resources permit — especially given the validation feedback on those issues.

In addition, those elements of the plan that do have baseline research should be evaluated and updated at the end of five years regarding new facts and the effectiveness /non-effectiveness of strategies. Finally, a new community survey should be mailed to every household in order to determine any new or changed conditions that the community needs to respond to.

Stewardship

The most important action to assure that the plan becomes an effective document and guide for change is the plan stewardship function, which is assured through the Weaving Wallingford project. And perhaps the most important of all the functions of stewardship is to make sure that the plan gets results. It is for this reason that both during the planning and now that the planning is finished, the focus of Weaving Wallingford is on getting it done.

Getting It Done: A List of Ongoing Projects of Weaving Wallingford.

Often citizens get engaged in neighborhood and civic activities when they're angry about something. Neighborhood Planning has given many residents a way to meaningfully participate in community processes before we have a problem. At least in Wallingford, the increased participation has resulted in noticeable improvements in our civic environment that include healthier group processes, community meetings with much better tone and quality, more reliable feedback about community-wide issues, and opportunities to participate in activities that weren't possible before.

The following is a partial list of things that we attribute directly to the opportunities made possible by neighborhood planning although few were actually part of the planning process

Projects & Events

These activities have given many neighborhood volunteers **opportunities** to invest their time and their skills to make **Wallingford** a better place to live. Project management for these activities is a huge job, but the benefits in the way of community **connectedness** and strength make us want to take the idea **much farther**.

- **Whatrs Cookin' in Wallingford- Organized by the Chair.** of the Business Health group, who is a volunteer and not a business owner, to help build some esprit de corps among restaurateurs who barely knew one another and to establish a community event in a neighborhood with a dearth of them.. The events have been held two years in a row and have been rousing successes.
- **Wallingford Welcomes Ballard** – Wallingford neighbors celebrated the reopening of Lincoln High School after 16 years of non-use by welcoming the Ballard High students and administration. Dozens of groups including Lincoln and Ballard slums, PTSAs and site councils from schools in both communities, as well as Wallingford churches, retailers, and residents helped to plan and carry out this hugely popular event.
- **Traffic calming on Thackeray** - Two **separate** groups of neighbors had been working independently, each unaware of the other, for over a year on this project when they were brought together at a TW transportation meeting. By working together, they convinced SEATRAN to take action on this worsening problem.
- **Tag Team** – The Community Council and the Chamber of Commerce have joined forces to organize volunteers who remove or report graffiti and to provide removal information and support for renters and non-resident property owners. With the help of Seattle Public Utilities, over two dozen neighbors have met and adopted blocks to patrol for litter and graffiti. Paint and supplies are paid for by the Chamber's Neighborhood Matching Grant.
- **Wallingford Gardens.** - A first annual event, that was held in the spring of 1998 brought together retailers, environmental groups, tree stewards and neighbors together to learn and tour local gardens as it helped establish Wallingford as a Gardening Center of Seattle.
- **Integration of QFC into the neighborhood** – In the fall of 1996, the popular Food Giant grocery store located in the heart of the community was sold to QFC, a member of the much-maligned category of Chain Stores. Before public outcry grew too loud, the neighborhood organized a meeting with representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, the Community Council, and QFC management to discuss mutual needs. The retailer appreciated and responded to community input and the result was a successful integration into the community.
- **Tree Steward/Junior Tree Steward Program** – A neighbor, who's goal is to re-tree Wallingford, was introduced to the Community Council, which not only sponsored her Tree Steward training, but established an on-going WCC sponsorship program for more neighborhood tree stewards. She's gone on to receive a Neighborhood Matching grant for her **Junior Tree Steward** project that teaches youngsters about urban forestry as it

recruits them to do necessary tree maintenance. Over 100 new trees will be planted before the end of this year and dozens of neighbors will have become invested in their community who never had a way to get connected before.

Commitment to improved communication has made all our recent projects possible – including Team Wallingford.

- E-News - Wallingford distributes E-news to a 280-member distribution list, a project that began as a Team Wallingford outreach effort. Contents include such things as announcements of City or neighborhood meetings and topics of interest to the community like changes in land use and provision of services; as well as City activities surrounding housing, transportation, parks, etc. Surveys of neighborhood opinions on such things as a walk-all-ways proposal for 45th & Wallingford and City discussions on logging the watershed followed by collection and forwarding of results have helped the neighborhood and the City understand what the community is thinking. Neighbors say they love the feeling of being a connected and appreciated part of their community. They also mention appreciating the opportunity to send meaningful input to decision-makers.
- Web Site - The neighborhood has received a Neighborhood Matching grant to design and implement a Wallingford Network website as a first step toward establishing the WEaving Wallingford communication network.

Successful City-Neighborhood Teamwork is Building Trust

The growing trust between citizens and government is an outcome from the planning process that can be most beneficial to both the neighborhood and the City in the long run. When provider and customer work as a team, government doesn't have to make decisions in a vacuum and residents don't have to end up resenting solutions- and the Departments that made them – because they haven't had an opportunity to participate in the process. The neighborhood intends to nurture this new paradigm and keep it in place long after planning is done.

- The barge house – When an illegal barge house appeared on Wallingford's Lake Union shore, neighbors found out about it via the e-news network and supported DCLU in their decision to enforce the laws as they exist. The barge house is gone along with other similarly non-conforming uses and residents feel satisfied with the outcome.
- Thackeray parking - Using neighborhood connections established through the Tree Steward program, neighbors began working with officials to calm traffic on their street. SEATRAN and METRO decision makers have made site visits and are actively soliciting resident input as they look for a solution that satisfies all parties' needs.
- Wallingford Steps – DCLU was approached by a developer requesting a zoning change in order to build on land adjacent to the Wallingford Steps project proposed in our plan. The Department's response was to send them back out to the community first, a demonstration of respect that Wallingford truly appreciated. Following the

architect's presentation to the Community Council, the developer, SEATRAN, the Parks Department and DCLU are presently working toward an excellent outcome.